

Paraunter she may be youre purgatorie!
She may be Goddes meene, and Goddes whippe!
Thanne shal youre soule up to hevene skippe
Swifter than dooth an arwe out of the bowe!
I hope to God, herafter shul ye knowe
That ther nys no so greet felicitie
In mariage, ne nevere mo shal bee,
That yow shal lette of youre savacioun,
So that ye use, as skile is and resoun,
The lustes of youre wyf attemptrely,
And that ye plesse hire nat to amorously,
And that ye kepe yow eek from oother synne.
My tale is doon: for that my witte is thynne.
Beth nat agast herof, my brother deere.
But lat us waden out of this mateere.
The Wyf of Bathe, if ye han understonde,
Of mariage, which ye have on honde,
Declared hath ful wel in litel space.

AND with this word this Justyn & his brother
Han take hir leve, and ech of hem of oother.
For whan they saugh that it moste nedes be,
They wroghten so, by sly and wys trectee,
That she, this mayden, which that Mayus highte,
As hastily as evere that she myghte,
Shal wedded be unto this Januarie.
I trowe it were to longe yow to tarie,
If I yow tolde of every scrit and bond,
By which that she was feffed in his lond;
Or for to herkenen of hir riche array.
But finally yowen is the day
That to the chirche bothe be they went
for to receyve the hooly sacrament.
forth comth the preest, with stole aboute his
nekke,
And bad hire be lyk Sarra and Rebekke
In wysdom and in trouthe of mariage;
And seyde his orisons as is usage,
And croucheth hem, and bad God sholde hem
blesse.

And made al siker ynogh with hoolynesse.
HAS been they wedded with
solempnitee,
And at the feeste sitteth he and she,
With other worthy folk, upon the
deys.

Al ful of joye & blisse is the paleys,
And ful of instruments, and of vitaille,
The moste deynthevous of al Ytaille.
Biforn hem stode swich instruments of soun,
That Orpheus, ne of Thebes Amphion,
Ne maden nevere swich a melodye.
At every cours thanne cam loud mynstralcy
That nevere tromped Joab, for to heere,
Nor he, Theodomas, yet half so cleere,
At Thebes, whan the citee was in doute.
Bacus the wyn hem skynketh al aboute,
And Venus laugheth upon every wight.
For Januarie was become hir knyght,
And wolde bothe assaye his corage
In libertee, and eek in mariage.
And with hire fyrbrond in hire hand aboute
Daunceth biforn the bryde and al the route.

And certainly, I dar right wel seyn this,
Ymeneus, that god of wedding is,
Saugh nevere his lyf so myrie a wedded man.
FOOLD thou thy pees, thou poete Marcan,
That writest us that ilke wedding mure,
Of hire, Philologie, and hym, Mercurie,
And of the songes that the Muses songe,
To smal is bothe thy penne, and eek thy tonge,
for to descreyven of this mariage.
Whan tendre youthe hath wedded stoupyng age,
Ther is swich myrthe that it may nat be writen.
Assayeth it yourself, thanne may ye witen
If that I lye or noon in this matiere.

MAYUS, that sit with so benyngne a chiere,
Hire to biholde, it semed faierye.
Queene Ester looked nevere with swich an
eye
On Assuer, so meke a look hath she.
I may yow nat devyse al hir beautee;
But thus muche of hire beautee telle I may,
That she was lyk the brighte morwe of May,
fulfid of alle beautee and plesaunce.

THIS Januarie is ravysshed in a trauce
At every tyme he looked on hir face;
But in his herte he gan hire to manace,
That he that nyght in armes wolde hire streyne
harder than evere Parys dide Eleyne.
But natheles, yet hadde he greet pitee,
That thilke nyght offenden hire moste he;
And thoughte, Alas! O tendre creature!
Now wolde God ye myghte wel endure
Al my corage, it is so sharp and keene;
I am agast ye shul it nat sustene.
But God forbode that I dide al my myght!
Now wolde God that it were woxen nyght,
And that the nyght wolde lasten everemo.
I wolde that al this peple were ago!
And finally, he dooth al his labour,
As he best myghte, sayyng his honour,
To haste hem fro the mete in subtil wyse.

THE tyme cam that resoun was to ryse;
And after that, men daunce & drynken faste,
And spices al aboute the hous they caste;
And ful of joye and blisse is every man;
Al but a squyer, highte Damyan,
Which carf biforn the knyght ful many a day.
He was so ravysshed on his lady May,
That for the verray payne he was ny wood:
Almoost he swelte and swowned ther he stood.
So soore hath Venus hurt hym with hire brond,
As that she bar it daunsyng in hire bond;
And to his bed he wente hym hastily.
Namore of hym as at this tyme speke I;
But there I lete hym wepe ynogh and pleyne,
Til fresshe May wol rewen on his payne.

PERILOUS fyr, that in the bed-
straw bredeth!
O famulier foo, that his servyce
bedeth!
O servant traytour, false hoomly
hewe,
Lyk to the naddre in bosom, sly, untrew,
God shilde us alle from youre aqueyntaunce!

O Januarie, dronken in plesaunce
Of mariage, se how thy Damyan,
Thyn owene squier and thy borne man,
Entendeth for to do thee vileynye.
God graunte thee thyn hoomly fo tespye;
for in this world nys worse pestilence
Than hoomly foo al day in thy presence.

HERFORNED hath the sonne his
ark diurne,
No lenger may the body of hym
sojurne
On thorisonte, as in that latitude.
Night with his mantel, that is derk
and rude.

Gan oversprede the hemysperie aboute;
for which departed is this lusty route
fro Januarie, with thank on every syde.
Hoom to hir houses lustily they ryde,
Wheras they doon hir thynges as hem leste,
And whan they sye hir tyme, goon to reste.

SOONE after that, this hastif Januarie
Wolde go to bedde, he wolde no lenger tarye.
He drynketh ypcoras, clarre, and vernage
Of spices hoot, tencressen his corage;
And many a letuarie hath he ful fyn,
Swiche as the cursed monk, Daun Constantyn,
hath writen in his book, De Coitu;
To eten hem alle, he nas nothing eschu.

FOR Goddes love, as soone as it may be,
Lat voyden al this hous in curteys wyse.
And they han doon right as he wol devyse.
Men drynken, and the travers drawe anon;
The bryde was broght abedde as stille as stoon;
And whan the bed was with the preest yblessed,
Out of the chambre hath every wight hym dressed.

And Januarie hath faste in armes take
his fresshe May, his paradys, his make.
He lullet hire, he kisset hire ful ofte
With thilke Brustles of his berd unsotte,
Lyk to the skyn of houndfysch, sharpe as brere;
for he was shave al newe in his manere.
He rubbeth hire aboute hir tendre face
And seyde thus, Alas! I moot trespace
To yow, my spouse, and yow greetly offende,
for tyme come that I wil doun descende.
But natheles, considereth this, quod he,
Ther nys no werkman, whatsoevere he be,
That may bothe werke wel and hastily;
This wol be doon at leyser parfitylly.

It is no fors how longe that we pleye;
In trewe wedlok wedded be we tweye;
And blessed be the yolk that we been inne,
for in oure actes we mowe do no synne.
A man may do no synne with his wyf,
Ne hurte hymselfen with his owene knyff;
for we han leve to pleye us by the lawe.

THUS laboureth he til that the day gan dawne;
And thanne he taketh a sop in fyne clarre,
And upright in his bed thanne sitteth he;
And after that he sang ful loud and cleere,
And kiste his wyf, and made wantowne cheere.
He was al coltish, ful of ragerye,

And ful of jargon as a flekked pye.
The slakke skyn aboute his nekke shaketh
Whil that he sang; so chaunteth he and craketh.
But God woot what that May thoughte in hire
herte,

Whan she hym saugh up sittynge in his sherte,
In his nyght cappe, and with his nekke lene;
She preyseth nat his pleying worth a bene.

THANNE seide he thus, My reste wol I take;
Now day is come, I may no lenger wake.
And doun he leyde his heed, and sleep til
pryme.

And afterward, whan that he saugh his tyme,
Up ryseth Januarie; but fresshe May
Holdeth hire chambre unto the fourthe day,
As usage is of wyves for the beste;
for every labour som tyme moot han reste,
Or elles longe may he nat endure;
This is to seyn, no lyves creature,
Be it of fyssh, or bryd, or beest, or man.

NOW wol I speke of woful Damyan,
That langwissheth for love, as ye shul heere;
Therfore I speke to hym in this manere:

I seye, O sely Damyan, alas!
Answer to my demaunde, as in this cas,
How shaltow to thy lady, fresshe May,
Telle thy wo? She wole alwey seye Nay.
Eek if thou speke, she wol thy wo biwreye;
God be thyn help, I kan no better seye.

This sike Damyan in Venus fyr
So brenneth, that he dyeth for desyr;
for which he putte his lyf in aventure,
No lenger myghte he in this wise endure;
But prively a penner gan he borwe,
And in a lettre wroot he al his sorwe,
In manere of a compleynt or a lay,
Unto his faire fresshe lady May;
And in a purs of silk, heng on his sherte,
he hath it put, and leyde it at his herte.

The moone that, at noon, was, thilke day
That Januarie hath wedded fresshe May,
In two of Tawr, was into Cancre glyden,
So longe hath Mayus in hir chambre byden,
As custome is unto thise nobles alle.

A bryde shal nat eten in the halle,
Til dayes foure or thre dayes atte leeste
Ypassed been; thanne lat hire go to feeste.
The fourthe day complet fro noon to noon,
Whan that the heighe masse was ydoon,
In halle sit this Januarie, and May
As fresshe as is the brighte someres day.

And so bifel, how that this goode man
Remembred hym upon this Damyan,
And seyde, Seynte Marie! how may this be,
That Damyan entendeth nat to me?
Is he ay syk? or how may this bityde?

His squieres, whiche that stooden ther bisyde,
Excused hym bycause of his siknesse,
Which letted hym to doon his bisynesse;
Noon oother cause myghte make hym tarye.

THAT me forthynketh, quod this Januarie,
He is a gentil squier, by my trouthe!
If that he deyde, it were harm and routh;